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A world fit for children

Draft text submitted by the Bureau of the Preparatory Committee for the Special Session of the General Assembly on Children

Summary

In its resolution 54/93 of 7 December 1999, the General Assembly decided to convene a special session to review achievement of the goals of the World Summit for Children, and that the special session would undertake a renewed commitment and consider future action for children in the next decade. By resolution 55/26 of 20 November 2000, the General Assembly reaffirmed these commitments and decided to hold the special session on children from 19 to 21 September 2001.

The Preparatory Committee for the special session, at its first substantive session, authorized its Bureau, with support of the substantive secretariat, to prepare a draft outcome document, taking into account the views expressed during the first substantive session of the Committee, for consideration at the second substantive session (A/55/43 (Part II), para. 22).

The present draft provisional outcome document, entitled "A world fit for children", will be considered by the Preparatory Committee at its second substantive session, under item 5 of the provisional agenda.

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I. Our vision

1. Eleven years ago, at the World Summit for Children, world leaders undertook a joint commitment and issued an urgent, universal appeal to give every child a better future.

2. Since then, much progress has been made. Thanks to the commitments made at the World Summit, as set out in the World Declaration on the Survival, Protection and Development of Children and the Plan of Action for the implementation of the Declaration in the 1990s,[1] millions of young lives have been saved, more children than ever are in school and important treaties have been concluded to protect children from exploitation. These gains have helped make the world a better place for many children. Yet, a brighter future for all has proved elusive, and overall gains have not met national obligations and international commitments.

3. Every one of us has the power to change the world for and with children. We have a historic opportunity to redeem our obligations by mobilizing a global movement for children that is guided by history's most ratified human rights instrument, the Convention on the Rights of the Child.[2]

4. As States parties and signatories to the Convention, we recognize that our joint commitment and appeal must go beyond words, to political will on a global scale, with resources and actions to match.

5. We will build a world in which all children enjoy a childhood: a world of play and learning, in which children are loved and cherished, their safety and well-being are paramount, their gender is not a liability, and where they can grow to adulthood in health, peace and dignity.

6. In creating such a child-friendly world, we affirm our obligation to safeguard the rights of all children by means of national action and international cooperation, utilizing the maximum available resources and according the highest priority to fulfilling the rights of the most disadvantaged children in our societies.

7. We reaffirm the inextricable link between the human rights of children and women, and will continue to work to ensure that there is both legal recognition of the rights of women and girls and an end put to the inequality, discrimination and violence that they endure.

8. We regard children and young people as resourceful citizens capable of helping to build a better future for humankind. Accordingly, we will create an environment that fully engages and involves them in decisions that affect their lives, in line with their evolving capacities.

9. We reaffirm our vow to break the cycle of poverty within a single generation, united in the conviction that poverty reduction must begin with children and the realization of their rights.

10. In all these undertakings, our vision for children is based on the firm conviction that the best interests of the child shall always be our primary consideration.

II. Our challenge

11. In the 1990s, considerable progress was made towards achieving the goals of the World Summit for Children and realizing the rights enshrined in the Convention on the Rights of the Child in a variety of areas. Yet for all the advances made, the lives of countless children and their families continue to be blighted by crushing poverty. Many of the promises made for children at the world summits and international conferences of the past decade remain unfulfilled.

12. Discrimination promotes a vicious cycle of social and economic exclusion. Whether rooted in race, colour, sex, religion, economic status, political or other opinion, national, ethnic or social origin or disability, discrimination frequently reflects disparities in key areas of children's lives, and these disparities are on the rise around the world, both among and within countries.

13. Social and economic pressures are undermining the crucial role of parents and families in ensuring the right of children to grow up in a safe, stable and nurturing environment. Families today exist in diverse forms, even headed by children themselves in some situations. There is an urgent need to support families in providing safe, stable and supportive environments for children.

14. No less than 1.2 billion persons, half of them children, struggle to survive on less than one dollar per day. The overwhelming effects of external debt, poverty, weak infrastructure and services of poor quality contribute to more than 10 million children under the age of five dying each year, mostly from preventable diseases and malnutrition. Complications in pregnancy and childbirth kill more than half a million women a year. More than 1 billion persons cannot obtain safe drinking water and 2.4 billion lack access to adequate sanitation. At least 40 million children a year are unregistered at birth, violating their right to a name and the right to acquire a nationality.

15. The human immunodeficiency virus/acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (HIV/AIDS) pandemic is reversing decades' worth of gains for children, especially in sub-Saharan Africa, and is spreading rapidly in other regions of the world. It must be confronted with utmost urgency, just as the world must confront the resurgence of other infectious diseases, such as malaria and tuberculosis.

16. One of every ten children lives with some form of disability. Children with disabilities, in particular girls, often lack access to the most basic services, are discriminated against and, in many societies, are effectively excluded from citizenship.

17. Inadequate sanitation, poor hygiene, unsafe drinking water, air pollution, hazardous wastes and crowded housing all continue to stunt the physical and mental development of millions of children. Indeed, a number of global environmental trends pose major challenges to the future well-being of children, including the unsustainable use of water and other natural resources.

18. Drug abuse is a menace to large numbers of young people and children. Concerted action is needed by Governments and intergovernmental agencies to combat the illicit production, supply, demand, trafficking and distribution of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances.

19. One third of all children fail to complete five years of schooling, the minimum required for basic literacy. Over 110 million children of primary-school age, the majority of them girls, are not enrolled in school. Millions more are taught by untrained and underpaid teachers in overcrowded, unhealthy and poorly equipped classrooms. In a world of rapid technological change, children without basic education, including the many millions trapped in child labour, are consigned to a form of disability and exclusion.

20. The impact of conflict on children continues to be devastating and widespread. During the 1990s, more than 2 million children died as a result of armed conflict; more than three times that number were permanently disabled or seriously injured. Few children living in war-affected areas can aspire to even the most basic standards of care, education or health. Many are murdered, maimed, abducted or sexually abused. Over 300,000 children have been recruited as participants in recent armed conflicts. Small arms and landmines continue to wreak havoc on children's lives. The plight of 20 million refugee and displaced children is particularly acute.

21. The vulnerability of children leaves them exposed to violence, abuse and exploitation. Over 100 million children work in dangerous circumstances. Many are in bonded labour, subjected to trafficking or forced into prostitution or pornographic activity. Physical violence and mental abuse directed at children are pervasive in the home, in schools, in institutions and in the community. Too frequently, abuse is carried out by those directly responsible for the care and protection of the child.

III. New opportunities

22. The world now has the normative framework, the communications capacity, the technical know-how and the financial resources to meet the most pressing needs of children and to ensure their rights. The nearly universal ratification of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, together with a range of other human rights instruments and obligations, including the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women,[3] set out entitlements for children and women clearly and compellingly.

23. New approaches to development in the past decade have reinforced the conviction that efforts to overcome poverty and exclusion must be guided by universal values and human rights, beginning with the rights of the child. A human rights-based approach to development addresses discrimination at all levels, including economic and social policies and practices, as well as political decisions. It empowers families and communities to secure the support that they need. A human rights-based approach implies that all investment proposals must be considered in terms not only of their contribution to economic growth but also in the value that they add to improving the human condition, especially the well-being of children.

24. At the Millennium Summit of the United Nations, the largest-ever gathering of world leaders reaffirmed a set of universal values: freedom, equality, solidarity, tolerance and non-violence, respect for nature, and shared responsibility for promoting human security and human development. Respect for these values can best manifest itself in our commitment to the rights of the child as a moral imperative and a normative requirement, and as the fastest route to social and economic progress.

25. The protection of children in armed conflict has moved closer to the centre of the international peace and security agenda, as underlined by the Security Council and by increasing numbers of regional organizations.

26. Enhanced partnerships with the private sector, based on the understanding that thriving markets and human security go hand in hand, carry the promise of accelerated progress for children, including the creation of more child-friendly environments in communities and households.

27. Children must be the starting point for any effort to develop a culture of peace and non-violence, and the proclamation by the General Assembly of an International Decade for a Culture of Peace and Non-Violence for the Children of the World (2001-2010)[4] offers the world an opportunity to promote respect for the life and dignity of every human being, without any kind of prejudice or discrimination.

28. The global information and communication revolution is creating new opportunities for people to participate in development and in the protection of their rights. These opportunities have given rise to a global movement for children, which is harnessing a wide range of expertise, commitment, leadership and experience, especially among children and young people.

29. Rapid breakthroughs in medical and health technology, including new and improved vaccines and expanded understanding of the benefits of micronutrients, hold the promise of saving and enhancing the lives of countless numbers of children, including those that are hardest to reach.

30. The challenge before us, as political and civic leaders, is to renew our commitment to invest in our common future, translating that commitment into realistic targets and practical actions.

IV. Goals, targets and reduction of disparities

31. The 1990s have shown that goals and targets are powerful spurs for social development. They have proved particularly useful in two ways: in motivating and mobilizing national actors and international partners into action; and in providing benchmarks for measuring progress.

32. Many goals and targets relevant to children have been endorsed and reaffirmed by the major United Nations summit meetings and conferences of the past decade. There is wide international consensus on goals to reduce infant and under-five mortality, maternal mortality and child malnutrition; to improve education and adult literacy; to achieve gender equality; to provide universal access to safe water and adequate sanitation; and to protect children from HIV/AIDS and the effects of armed conflict, child labour, and sexual exploitation and abuse.

33. These goals and targets remain the basis for realizing the rights of all children and adolescents.

34. At the World Summit for Children, agreement was reached on a set of goals for the 1990s, and for a review at the end of the decade. Goals and targets relevant to children were also formalized at subsequent global gatherings. These include commitments made for 2015 during the review of the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development and at the Millennium Summit. We now commit ourselves

to a set of core objectives for the next decade. These will serve as milestones for action in achieving longer-term goals and targets:

(a) Universal ratification of the Convention on the Rights of the Child as a matter of urgency, and universal ratification by 2003 of its optional protocols on the involvement of children in armed conflict,[5] and on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography;[6]

(b) Review of national legislation in all countries to ensure full conformity with the standards of the Convention on the Rights of the Child and its optional protocols by 2005;

(c) Universal ratification of International Labour Organization Convention No. 182 to eliminate the worst forms of child labour by 2005;

(d) Implementation of the 20/20 initiative, allocating at least 20 per cent of the national budgets of developing countries and at least 20 per cent of the aid budgets of donor countries to basic social services;

(e) Registration of all births and possession by all children of a birth certificate, by 2010;

(f) Increase by 50 per cent in the coverage of programmes aimed at promoting the physical, emotional, social and cognitive development of children aged 0-8 years using nationally agreed indicators;

(g) Reduction by one third of the proportion of children growing up alone, including orphans, and the promotion of alternative care solutions that are guided by the best interests of the child;

(h) Development of policies and programmes to protect children from violence, and reducing by one half the proportion of child victims of domestic and community violence;

(i) Development of programmes to promote educational opportunities and vocational training for adolescents;

(j) Reduction in HIV infection rates in young persons aged 15 to 24 years by at least 25 per cent in the most affected countries, by 2005, and by 25 per cent globally, by 2010;

(k) Providing 75 per cent of HIV-infected women throughout the world with effective treatment to reduce mother-to-child transmission of the AIDS virus, by 2010;

(l) Reduction in the rates of infant and under-five mortality by at least one third, between 2000 and 2010;

(m) Reduction in the maternal mortality rate by at least one third, between 2000 and 2010;

(n) Global eradication of poliomyelitis, certified by 2005;

(o) Immunization in every district of at least 80 per cent of children under one year of age against diphtheria, pertussis, tetanus, measles and tuberculosis, immunization of women of childbearing age against tetanus, and extension of the benefits of new and improved vaccines and other preventive health interventions to children in all countries;

(p) Virtual elimination of iodine deficiency disorders by 2005 and vitamin A deficiency by 2010;

(q) Reduction in the percentage of stunted children under five years of age by at least one third of the 2000 level by 2010;

(r) Reduction by one third of the number of people without access to hygienic sanitation facilities and adequate quantities of affordable and safe water, by 2010;

(s) As a step towards achieving the goals set by the World Education Forum for 2015, the reduction by 50 per cent of school-age children out of school and an increase in primary enrolment to at least 90 per cent by 2010;

(t) Achievement by all children of nationally defined levels of learning in numeracy, literacy and life skills;

(u) Gender parity in access to primary education by 2005.

35. All countries should adopt a set of specific, time-bound and measurable goals and targets based on the above, and on the tasks outlined in section V below, with appropriate adaptation to the specific situation of each country. These goals for children must be an integral part of national and subnational development programmes, poverty reduction strategies, sector-wide approaches and other relevant development plans.

36. While global goals and targets provide a good sense of general progress made at the national level, they can hide wide disparities. Since many disparities arise from discrimination and form a core violation of the rights of the child, it is vital that goals for children include targets for reducing disparities. This will help to focus efforts on reducing disparities between girls and boys, between rural and urban families, and between wealthy and poor children, and will help to highlight gaps in performance among States, provinces, districts, socio-economic groups, and rural and urban populations.

V. Our tasks

A. Acting in the best interests of the child

37. The principles enshrined in the Convention on the Rights of the Child, including the best interests of the child, non-discrimination, participation, and survival and development, provide the best normative framework for a world that is fit for children.

38. As States parties and signatories to the Convention on the Rights of the Child, we pledge to ensure that our national laws, policy, practice and allocation of resources are guided by the principle of the best interests of the child.

39. Poverty reduction must begin with children. No other age group is more likely to live in poverty, which causes life-long damage to minds and bodies. No other investment is likely to yield greater returns than investing in children. Children must be considered a priority in national allocation of resources, mobilization and management.

40. The family has the primary responsibility for the nurturing and protection of children. All institutions of society should respect and support the efforts of parents and other care providers to nurture and care for children in a safe and supportive environment.

41. Children's environments must be secure and child-friendly. All forms of violence against children should be forbidden by law. Preventive and protective systems against violence should be reinforced at the community level. Societies must promote a culture of respect for human rights and caring for children in every household, workplace and community.

42. Efforts must be made to ensure the strong involvement of civil society and the existence of decentralized structures that have the responsibility, authority and capacity to manage services and respond to children's basic needs. This will require capacity-building, strengthening of institutions to render them transparent and accountable, and increased community participation in resource allocation and management.

43. The well-being of children is a global common good. For the sake of the world's disadvantaged children, the feasibility must be explored of new proposals to provide a sustainable and predictable source of revenue for basic public services for children.

B. Protecting against abuse and exploitation

44. Children are particularly vulnerable to abuse, violence, neglect and exploitation. These violations of their rights not only reflect deeper societal problems such as poverty, discrimination and conflict, but also are perpetuated in adulthood and in future generations. Priority attention and resources must therefore go to those who are most at risk in our societies.

45. Comprehensive solutions must be found to the problems that cause children to work and/or live on the streets. Appropriate programmes and policies for the protection, rehabilitation and reintegration of street children must be implemented.

46. Policies and programmes must be improved for the protection, care and well-being of refugees, unaccompanied and internally displaced children, and basic services, including education, must be provided to them.

47. Necessary measures must be taken to ensure that children with disabilities enjoy all human rights and fundamental freedoms. Specific measures should be adopted and enforced to prevent discrimination against them, and to ensure their dignity, promote self-reliance and facilitate the child's active participation in the community, including access to education and health services.

48. The human rights of migrant children, especially those who are unaccompanied, must be protected.

49. The sexual abuse and exploitation of children must end. The Agenda for Action adopted by the World Congress against Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children[7] and the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography must be implemented as rapidly and fully as possible.

50. The HIV/AIDS pandemic is having a devastating effect on children and those who provide care for them. This includes the millions of children orphaned by AIDS, as well as families and service providers. Urgent action must be taken to reduce the spread of the virus, including mother-to-child transmission, and to mitigate the impact of the disease.

51. The rights of the child must have a permanent place at the heart of the agenda for international peace and security. To this end, the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court,[8] the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-personnel Mines and on Their Destruction,[9] and the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict must all be ratified and enforced at the earliest possible date. A system for reporting violations of child rights in war must be established and effectively implemented at both the national and international levels.

52. Consistent with their evolving capacities, children must be actively involved in peace-building initiatives and in emergency and other humanitarian assistance policies and programmes. This includes their participation in initiatives to promote their health and nutrition, education and learning, physical and psychological recovery and social reintegration.

53. Slavery, serfdom, trafficking, debt bondage, forced or compulsory labour and child prostitution have no place in society. To this end, the International Labour Organization Conventions, in particular Nos. 138 and 182 on child labour, must be ratified and implemented as soon as possible, as should the protocol to prevent, suppress and punish trafficking in persons, especially women and children, which will supplement the United Nations convention against transnational organized crime. Collective action is needed at the regional level to deal with cross-border trafficking in children and to bring the perpetrators to justice.

54. Policies and legislation must be designed to protect children from violence and exploitation. This includes promoting juvenile justice systems that fully safeguard the rights of the child.

55. Effective support must be provided for activities and programmes aimed at preventing the abuse of narcotic drugs, psychotropic substances, alcohol and tobacco, especially among children and young people in vulnerable situations.

56. Traditional practices that undermine the rights of the child and the rights of women, such as early marriage, dowry and female genital mutilation, must be ended.

C. Focusing on key outcomes

57. There are stages in life when a child is particularly vulnerable to risks, or exceptionally capable of rapid physical, intellectual and emotional development. Growth in childhood is a cumulative process. If the child does not benefit from adequate protection, stimulation and growth opportunities at critical junctures, the consequences can last a lifetime.

58. Accordingly, three key outcomes for children have emerged as a framework for action. They are based on the most recent scientific knowledge, combined with practical experience in promoting the principles of the Convention on the Rights of

the Child. All three will require unshakeable commitment and strong partnerships on a global scale. They are:

(a) A good start in life, in a nurturing and safe environment that enables children to survive and be physically healthy, mentally alert, emotionally secure, socially competent and able to learn;

(b) The opportunity to complete a basic education of good quality;

(c) For adolescents, the opportunity to develop fully their individual capacities in safe and enabling environments that empower them to participate in, and contribute to, their societies.

Early childhood development

59. Early childhood development is the foundation of human development. We must do everything in our power to give all infants the best possible start in life, with an emphasis on antenatal care, immunization, nutrition, psychosocial stimulation, and a safe and healthy environment. Recent findings in neuroscience underscore the critical importance of the first moments, months and years of a child's life.

60. To provide a safe and healthy start in life for all children, young people and men and women must have access to information and education on their common responsibilities as parents, and women of childbearing age must have access to quality reproductive health services to promote healthy pregnancy and childbirth.

61. All children must be registered at birth to ensure the right of every child to a name and the right to acquire a nationality.

62. Families, caregivers and children must have access to a full range of information and services to promote child survival, development, protection and participation. This must include assistance in such areas as pregnancy and childbirth, access to quality reproductive health services for women of childbearing age, nutrition, countering infectious diseases, care of children with disabilities, and the enhancement of children's social, emotional, cognitive and spiritual development.

63. All young children must be immunized with the full range of vaccines that are now available to prevent major childhood diseases. Special efforts will be required to certify the world as polio-free by 2005. The introduction of new and improved vaccines must be accelerated, and they must be made available to as many children as possible.

64. The protection and improvement of young children's nutritional status must be among the top priorities. Breastfeeding must be promoted and supported. The gains made in the fight against micronutrient deficiencies must be sustained and further expanded.

Basic education

65. Access to quality basic education is a fundamental human right and a key to sustainable development and a thriving democracy. Education equips children with the skills and confidence to make the most of their abilities, to join a dynamic workforce and succeed in a sustainable livelihood. It provides a forum for changing

attitudes about violence, while promoting equality of opportunity. It helps to put children, especially girls, on a path to empowerment.

66. Parents and families are children's first teachers and play a key role in their learning. Basic education strategies must, however, include the mobilization of all actors across society, from families to finance ministers, from communities to central governments.

67. In line with the outcome of the Millennium Summit of the United Nations and of the World Education Forum held at Dakar from 26 to 28 April 2000, we must ensure that free and compulsory basic education of good quality is available to all children, boys and girls alike.

68. Special strategies and efforts must be implemented to provide quality basic education to those children commonly excluded from educational opportunities.

69. The education of girls must be accorded a high priority. Gender equality must be a paramount goal of education. Educational programmes must address discrimination that grows out of cultural traditions, social attitudes and practices, or legal and economic factors.

70. Children must be encouraged to participate in the creation of a child-friendly learning environment in which they feel safe, protected from abuse and discrimination, and are encouraged to learn. An essential part of this process is education for peace, human rights, fundamental freedoms and human values.

71. It is necessary to take steps to identify, attract, train and retain good teachers throughout the educational system by enhancing their status, morale and professionalism.

72. Education is a central component in preventing conflict and promoting peaceful means for conflict resolution. Schools can provide an atmosphere of stability for children who are caught up in war. Schooling can be an effective deterrent to the recruitment of children as participants in armed conflict. Sustained national and international commitment is critical to the continuation and expansion of good-quality educational services in post-conflict societies.

73. Rapidly evolving information and communication technologies must be harnessed to support basic education at an affordable cost, and to reduce inequity in access and quality.

Adolescent development and participation

74. Adolescents are a vibrant and creative force, but they are also vulnerable to violence, abuse and alienation. Their positive energy and creativity must be nurtured and developed. Their health and development are central to preventing a range of immediate threats, such as HIV/AIDS, substance abuse and violence, as well as a host of problems that, at a subsequent stage, can threaten their lives and those of their children.

75. In accordance with their evolving capacity, adolescents must be encouraged to participate in processes and decisions that affect them and supported in that regard. Young people are agents of change. By sharing and expressing their views freely, and by receiving and imparting information and ideas, they will be empowered to build better futures.

76. Adolescents must have every opportunity to develop into caring and responsible citizens. They must be encouraged to develop skills to cope with the demands of adult life, such as conflict resolution, decision-making and communication. At the same time, disadvantaged and marginalized adolescents need a second chance to acquire a quality basic education.

77. Children and adolescents must be supported in learning how to protect themselves from HIV infection. There must be voluntary and confidential counselling and testing for HIV/AIDS. Young people should receive guidance and support in the prevention and treatment of HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted infections.

78. Protecting and promoting the rights of adolescents, especially those struggling to grow up amid adversity, can help break inter-generational patterns of poverty, socio-economic exclusion, gender and ethnic discrimination, exploitation, abuse and violence. This will improve the health, nutrition, education and social status of present and future generations.

79. There is a need for programmes that address the psychosocial needs of adolescent boys and girls living in conflict situations and other emergencies, and for those subjected to physical and psychological violence and abuse.

80. Adolescents need to have increased access to livelihood opportunities that are appropriate to their evolving capacities and that contribute to their development.

VI. Our strategies

81. There are five major strategies for our actions. The first is to tap the power, energy and resourcefulness of children and young people themselves. Children and adolescents have the potential to contribute to a better world for all. Meeting the basic needs and fulfilling the fundamental rights of children requires that we work not only for children but also with them, in accordance with their age and maturity. They are citizens and holders of rights; they are strategic partners and not simply members of target groups.

82. The second strategy is to use a child-centred approach in our national policies and programmes, as well as in our decision-making. Intergovernmental processes, whether dealing with aid, trade, debt or peace and security, must assess the impact of the proposed actions on the fulfilment of the rights of the child.

83. The third strategy is to enhance efficiency in the use of resources, while promoting greater and more equitable allocation of resources for children. This will require transparent and accountable institutions and increased community participation.

84. The fourth strategy is to take steps to increase participation. Families and communities must be fully involved in decision-making for human development. Decentralization and community participation must be encouraged and supported to complement governmental action.

85. The fifth strategy is to strengthen partnerships for and with children. In recent years, globalization has irrevocably altered the relationship between Governments, non-governmental organizations and the private sector. New partnerships with civil society organizations, the media and children themselves must be fostered to

promote human development, fulfil the rights of children and women and accelerate progress.

86. We seek the active participation of civil society, including the private sector and the business community, to contribute to the realization of child rights as part of their social responsibility. Public-private partnerships will be of vital importance for improving the well-being of children, especially in ensuring that children benefit from breakthroughs in science, medical technology, interactive learning methods, capacity-building and mass communications.

87. We will work with the corporate sector to find ways to maximize their contribution to the achievement of the goals for child survival, development, protection and participation. These may encompass different areas, including the provision of financial support and support for research and development and capacity-building.

88. We will promote more research and development for children, in partnership with industry and academic institutions. Priority will be given to the development of vaccines for malaria, respiratory infections, diarrhoea and HIV/AIDS; high-yield food crops that resist drought and pests and contain high levels of micronutrients; and affordable communications technology that can help narrow the digital divide.

VII. Monitoring

89. We must improve the monitoring of how effectively child rights are being realized. This will require better data collection, analysis and disaggregation, and wider dissemination at different levels of society. In this way, we will better inform our plans and policies, and improve resource mobilization and advocacy on behalf of children.

90. We will encourage independent monitoring of the situation of children at the international, national and community levels to complement regular monitoring systems, while building community capacity for self-monitoring and meaningful participation.

91. Subnational and local authorities, together with civil society organizations and the private sector, must periodically review budget allocations, policies, institutional arrangements and other initiatives relevant to the realization of the rights of the child.

92. Indicators, both quantitative and qualitative, must be developed to monitor the effectiveness of development efforts at the national level related to the key outcomes for children.

93. We request that the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), as the world's lead agency for children, prepare, in collaboration with the Committee on the Rights of the Child, other relevant United Nations agencies and non-governmental organizations, a consolidated analysis of the action taken by individual countries and the international community in support of the objectives of the present agenda.

94. We request the Secretary-General to report regularly to the General Assembly on the progress made in the implementation of the present agenda.

VIII. Our commitments

95. We are convinced that major progress is possible within a generation, if there is concerted action, true partnership and inspired leadership for children. We have articulated the tasks required and the measures and milestones of progress. We hereby make the following commitments to advance the realization of our vision for children.

96. We will ensure that, at the national level, our laws, policies and practices are consistent with the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. Our focus on the fulfilment of the rights of children and women is essential to promoting peace, justice, security and improvements in the quality of life of all people.

97. We will create a political and social climate in all our societies that will hold us accountable for our obligations to children and for the fulfilment of the tasks that we have set out above. Such a climate will show no tolerance for those who violate child rights or who collude in their violation. We will continuously monitor the action taken to fulfil our obligations.

98. We call upon families, communities, local government, civil society organizations, social, cultural, religious, business and other institutions, including the mass media, to play an active role in the achievement of the goals and targets agreed upon for children.

99. We seek the full collaboration of all relevant United Nations bodies, as well as the Bretton Woods institutions, in ensuring rapid progress for children.

100. We commit ourselves to mobilizing resources for children in a way that favours the social sector over military expenditure. We will restructure national budget and aid flows to achieve universal and equitable access to basic social services, based on mutual agreement, in line with the Oslo Consensus and Hanoi Consensus on the 20/20 Initiative.

101. At the international level, we call for enhanced cooperation to fulfil the agreed target of 0.7 per cent of the gross national product of developed countries for official development assistance. We will ensure that, in all debt relief programmes and poverty reduction strategies, the rights and needs of children are given priority attention.

102. We will give priority to addressing the special needs of children in the least developed countries. Special measures will be taken, such as improving market access for export products from these countries, granting more generous development assistance and cancelling all official bilateral debt of countries that make a demonstrable commitment to poverty reduction.

103. We will respond positively to the special needs of the landlocked countries, small island developing countries and countries in transition in their efforts to improve the well-being of children and the protection of their rights.

104. The well-being of children is in particular peril in sub-Saharan Africa, the only region in which trends in child survival, development and protection are lagging. We will take special measures to address the challenges of poverty eradication and sustainable development in Africa, including debt cancellation, improved market

access, enhanced official development assistance, and capacity-building, in order to tackle the spread of the HIV/AIDS pandemic and other infectious diseases.

105. We are determined to address the crippling debt problem of low-income and middle-income developing countries, where millions of children lack access to basic education, primary health care, safe drinking water and adequate sanitation.

106. As States parties and signatories to the Convention on the Rights of the Child, we commit ourselves to making a world fit for every child, building on the achievements of the past decade and guided by the principle that the needs and rights of children must always come first. In solidarity with a broad range of partners, we will lead a global movement for children, which expresses our collective determination as it creates an unstoppable momentum for action. We make this solemn pledge, secure in the knowledge that in serving the best interests of children, we serve the best interests of all humanity.

Notes

[1] See A/45/625, annex.

[2] General Assembly resolution 44/25, annex.

[3] General Assembly resolution 34/180, annex.

[4] General Assembly resolution 53/25.

[5] General Assembly resolution 54/263, annex I.

[6] Ibid., annex II.

[7] See A/51/385, annex.

[8] A/CONF.183/9.

[9] See CD/1478.